

BMCW Partnership Council –

Out of Home Care and Adoption Committee

Notes: In discussion, the committee felt that the most impact for the committee would be focusing on Recommendation #1 – Permanency & Stability. This initiative would have the largest population base.

Recommendations from the Committee for workplans for 2013-14:

1. Permanency & Stability

The primary goal for any child coming into foster care is to be in a stable permanent family. Outcomes can look a number of different ways:

	Positive Outcomes	Negative Outcomes
Birth family		
	Child is returned to the birth family successfully	Child re-enters the foster care system
Foster Family	One family cares for the child (relative or non-relative) until the child has permanency achieved (returned home, guardianship or adoption)	Child has multiple moves within foster care
Guardianships or Adoptions	Child becomes a legal guardian of a family or is adopted and remains successfully in that family	Families make difficult decisions to request removal or TPR for that child. Child re-enters the system

Stability of placements and permanency benchmarks has been challenging. Data accumulated by the State supports the assertion that as children remain in care for longer periods of time, they will experience more placement changes. According to data accumulated from June of 2012 through May of 2013, 17% of children who were in care for less than 12 months experienced two or more placements. During the same time frame of June 2012 through May 2013, 39% of children were in care between 13 and 24 months experienced 2 or more placements. Children who have been in care for more than 25 months for this same time frame 62% experienced two or more placements. (Data collected from the State Placement Stability Dashboard which was updated on 6/11/2013) The committee would look at a number of items around this very important area:

- Compare stability of placements with relatives and non-relatives

- Look at models of support for foster parents
- Look at disruptions of young children and suggestion solutions
- Look at re-entry rates for children who have been reunited with their birth families as well as for children who are in guardianships or adoptions. What supports are needed?
- Look at what other information can be gathered from exit interviews with foster parents, birthparents, adoptive and guardianship families as to what services would have provided sufficient support to continue the placement.

2. Youth in care to age 21 who have an IEP (Individual Education Plan)

DCF is working with the legislature to allow youth with individualized education plans (IEP) to remain in care until age 21. This population of youth has developmental disabilities and/or mental health issues. Having a longer time period to find the housing/medical/work/support connections will bring better outcomes. The committee would look at:

- What services will be needed
- Are there services that are already developed and not being utilized as much as they could?
- Placement/housing resources
- Ways to manage movement in and out

3. Time to TPR (Termination of Parental Rights) & adoption

Federal timelines for permanency for children are tracked throughout the country and have also been tracked throughout the settlement agreement. The committee would look at:

- Comparing metrics to the rest of the state
- Reviewing OPLA (Other Planned Living Arrangements) and comparing with rest of state
- Analyzing if there are any barriers to timeliness that can be improved.